

TRIDENT PLOUGHSHARES

Newsletter for Supporters, May 2022

Trident Ploughshares is a campaign to disarm the UK Trident nuclear weapons system in a non-violent, open, peaceful and fully accountable manner

As the lockdown eased, TP members began cautiously to resume active campaigning against the UK's (and the world's) nuclear weapons. Below are some of the highlights.

February 2021: on-line launch of Angie Zelter's new book, 'Activism for Life'. Angie has written a remarkable account of her campaigning life and shared some of the lessons she has learnt from her actions in many different countries. The book is available at a cost of £12.99 plus £2.30 p&p, with 60% of the cover price going to TP. Contact jean.oliver49@yahoo.com if you would like a copy.

March 2021: TP responds to the UK government's announcement in the Integrated Defence Review that it will increase its cap on deployed and stockpiled nuclear bombs to 260, and at the same time will lower the threshold on the use of its nuclear weapons by indicating that we may fire them in response to "emerging technologies".

In a letter to the Prime Minister the campaigners point out that the move completely undermines any pretence the UK has of abiding by the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

30th April 2021: Climate activists from Extinction Rebellion Scotland, collaborating with Trident Ploughshares and Faslane Peace Camp, blocked the North gate of the Faslane Naval Base for 11 hours by locking on to three planters containing plants and flowers and painted with the words 'Safe', 'Green', and 'Future'.

At the same time a solitary vigil was held at the Albert Gate, Devonport Dockyard in Plymouth.

20th June 2021: Peaton Peace Pirates, a Trident Ploughshares affinity group, gathered outside the UK's Scotland Office in New Street, Edinburgh in a protest against the Westminster decision to increase the number of nuclear weapons which it deploys from Faslane and Coulport. Amongst placards pointing out the UK's disregard for Scotland's parliamentary and public opposition to nuclear weapons, and challenging the Westminster government to engage with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, one special one was reproduced in honour of stalwart campaigner Eric Wallace of Helensburgh, who died in 2016, and which read: "YOU'RE OUT OF ORDER, BY THE WAY".

August 6-9th 2021: fast and days of action to remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In London, TP organized daily vigils, actions, rallies and commemorative events outside the MOD and in Whitehall. In Bristol a four-day Peace Gathering included die-ins, discussion workshops and an open-air art gallery. Fasts were also held in 6 other countries.

14th September 2021: the Mad Hatters TP affinity group were joined by over 50 people to walk from Stratford Station to the ExCel Exhibition Centre in Docklands for the opening day of the 2021 DSEI Arms Fair where they dropped wreaths into the dock to remember some of the places where civilians have suffered from the weaponry on display at the fair.

October/November 2021: TP was part of the Peace and Climate Justice bloc at COP 26 in Glasgow, having previously, with XR Peace, put pressure on arms companies and the military around Glasgow, pointing out that militarism is a central pillar of the extractive systems and behaviours that are driving the climate crisis. TP members joined the Greenham Women for Life on Earth in a walk from Faslane, ending in Glasgow for the start of COP 26.

TP members continue to join with Nukewatch, a network of individuals who monitor and track the movement of British nuclear weapons from Aldermaston to Coulport.

Forthcoming Actions

Please support and circulate widely!

21st May 2022: CND is calling on people to gather at the main gates of USAF Lakenheath, from 1-3pm, to protest the potential arrival of US nuclear weapons. Lakenheath is being upgraded under a multi-million-dollar infrastructure programme.

10-17 June: Disarmament camp, Peaton Wood near Couplport. It will be a fairly autonomously organised 'camp', with mixed and women only camping spaces, but we do have some other accommodation and meeting places booked. Some XR Peace activists will join us, and as it is the Faslane Peace Camp's 40th anniversary, we will co-ordinate some actions with them.

Why now? The Ukraine crisis has made it clear that not only do nuclear weapons fail to prevent war, they also increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour by those states that possess them. It has shown that the risk of nuclear war is at a very high level and that such an outcome is horrifying beyond imagination.

We would love to see more TP folk during the week, so please join us if you can. More information can be found on the TP website.

16th June: Vigils will be held in London at the Russian, German and French Embassies and Downing Street, in support of the Nuclear Ban Treaty. There will be similar vigils in Paris and Berlin.

18-23 June, Vienna: meetings to mark the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), including

18-19 June ICAN Conference for civil society

20 June, International Governmental Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

21-23 June, First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW.

Some members of TP will be in attendance in Vienna.

Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), says: *“Vienna will be a moment where the world responds and creates the global nuclear disarmament plan. Nuclear weapons impact everyone and that’s why this meeting will be a place for all voices to be heard.”*

Your continued interest and support, including financial support, is greatly appreciated. Cheques payable to “Trident Ploughshares” can be sent to Jean Oliver, The Lodge, Main Street, Broughton, ML12 6HQ, or you can request a Standing Order form, or bank transfer details.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Trident Ploughshares, please email tp2000@gn.apc.org or phone 0845 45 88 366 for more information.

Do visit our website at tridentploughshares.org and Trident Ploughshares’ Facebook page or follow us on twitter @TridentPlough

*If you have received this by post but would prefer to hear news from TP by email, or if your contact details have changed, or **if you would like us to remove your details from our database**, please contact TP at jean.oliver49@yahoo.com or The Lodge, Main Street, Broughton, ML12 6HQ*